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ABSTRACT

An anonymous survey of 70% (N=21) of Harcum Junior College's full-time faculty was conducted in the fall of 1976 in order to ascertain self-reported levels of anxiety and sources of anxiety among the faculty. Results indicated that 7.4% of the faculty felt a great deal of anxiety, 9.4% a considerable amount, 20.7% felt some, 21.1% felt little, and 41.4% felt no anxiety. Sources of anxiety for those respondents who reported some level of anxiety ranged from size of individual classes (66%) and adapting classes to individual differences in student ability, interest, and need (57%), to incompatible relationships with supervisors (26%) and faculty interpersonal relations (24%). It was concluded that, in general, the Harcum faculty expressed a low level of anxiety, particularly when compared to national sample rates. Survey data is reported in tabular form. (JDS)

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Anxiety Indices Among Harcum Faculty

1. Most educators agree that teacher 'personality' and mental health, as they are reflected in classroom behavior, are matters of professional importance. Some have even attributed ineffective teaching to personality 'defects', such as insufficient warmth and enthusiasm, or excessive authoritarian and rigid attitudes.

2. Stress and tension among teachers, or 'anxiety' as it is often identified, has received considerable attention since early in this century. Just to mention a few of these inquiries, the Department of Teachers of the National Education Association (1938) reported that 37.5% of their national sample of 5,150 teachers indicated they were seriously worried and nervous. In 1951, 43% of a 2,200 sample of teachers reported that they were working under considerable strain and tension (NEA-1951), and of some 2,290 teachers surveyed in 1967, some 16.2% reported that they were working under considerable strain (NEA-1967). An additional 61.7% in the 1967 survey indicated they were working under 'moderate strain."

3. Although these self-assessed survey reports lack validation against other indices of anxiety, they do suggest that substantial numbers of teachers do experience strain, tension, or anxiety in the class. However, despite the fact that teachers have reported working under conditions of strain or tension (anxiety) to the point of discomfort, a review of research literature on the subject indicates that it remains to be conclusively determined whether anxiety is either detrimental or beneficial to faculty and students.

4. How do full-time Harcum faculty self-report their levels of anxiety, and what do they view as their sources of anxiety? An anonymous survey among them in the Fall of 1976 resulted in the following data furnished by the 21 respondents. A 5-step, Likert-type rating Scale was utilized to categorize these responses. The scheme for 'scoring' responses was as follows:

(1) a score of 5 was assigned to the highest rating level of anxiety; i.e. "A great deal." Next, 4 was assigned to "Considerable" on down to 1 for "none".

(2) The anxiety indexes listed in Table 1 were then determined by first computing the actual total scores of their responses and then expressing these totals as percentages of the maximum anxiety scores which would have resulted had all respondents rated the numbered questionnaire item as "A = A great deal!"

5. Table 1, which follows, presents, in descending order of anxiety intensities, the various sources of such concerns among some 70% of the Harcum full-time faculty, a substantial majority of this population.

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Table 1:- Expressed Anxiety Levels Relating to Individual Situation

1. Size of individual classes	=	66%
2. Adapting classes to individual differences in student ability, interest, and need	=	57%
3. Total number of students assigned	=	56%
4. Non-teaching 'clerical' duties	=	56%
5. Inadequate fringe benefits	=	54%
6. Inadequate salary	=	52%
7. Inadequacy of academic facilities	=	51%
8. Finding time for individuals and remedial work	=	49%
9. Motivating student interest and response	=	49%
10. In general, do you worry?	=	47%
11. Ability to bring about student learning	=	45%
12. Budgeting time	=	45%
13. Instructional planning	=	41%
14. Non-clerical, extra-curricular responsibilities	=	40%
15. Finding time for creative teaching	=	40%
16. Evaluating student achievement effectively	=	39%
17. Overall, do you consider yourself to be an anxious (nervous) person?	=	39%
18. Students not paying attention	=	37%
19. Ability to specify academic objectives for students	=	33%
20. Ability to understand student's capacities	=	30%
21. Student cheating	=	29%
22. Incompatible relationships with supervisor	=	26%
23. Faculty inter-personal relations	=	24%

5. Additional write-in sources of individual anxieties, and the indicated level of concern included the following:

- personal relationships (some)
- inequitable assignment of additional duties (clubs, activities, committees) without any consideration of compensation (some)
- inadequacies in heat in office and frequently classrooms (3 respondents)
- should be some way one could buy a-la-carte in the cafeteria
- free lunches (a great deal) (2 respondents)
- poor parking facilities (a great deal)

6. Relative intensities of anxiety, as reflected by the five descriptive phrases to which they responded, revealed the assessments indicated in Table 2, below:

Table 2:- Levels of Expressed Anxiety

A great deal	= 7.4%
Considerable	= 9.4%
Some	= 20.7%
Little	= 21.1%
None	= 41.4%

7. If all respondents had indicated their level of anxiety to be "A great deal!" for each of the 23 questionnaire items, this could be indicated, numerically, as a 100% selection of this most intense level of anxiety. In reality, only 7.4% of this particular level was expressed by the respondents, and for each of the 4 other 'degrees' of anxiety, only the percentages indicated above. Scanning Table 2, almost half expressed no concern whatsoever with reference to these 23 dimensions of their work environment, and only about one fifth, or less, indicated any of the other 4 anxiety levels.

8. Upon the assumption that this anonymous questionnaire survey truly reflects the views of the respondents, it is noted that only 2 indicated a "Considerable" response to the question- "In general, do you worry?" This 10% rate is in very sharp contrast to the 37.5% and 43% rates referenced in paragraph 2 above.

9. Overall, among these respondents, only 2 expressed the view that they have "Considerable" anxiety in considering themselves to be a 'nervous' person. In addition, only 6 expressed the view that they have "Some" degree of anxiety in considering themselves to be a 'nervous' person; 6 expressed "Little" concern; and 9, or 43%, expressed no concern, or anxiety, in their overall assessments.

10. It therefore appears quite reasonable to suggest that in general, the Harcum faculty expresses a 'low' level of anxiety, particularly when compared to the national sample rates reported in paragraph 2 above.

11. Anxiety may be correlated with inappropriate student and teacher performance, but further studies are needed which will define operationally (and rather specifically, too) how such anxious teachers act, and then seek to describe and/or measure possible functional relationships between teacher anxieties and student classroom behavior.

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